

Competencies and Program Objectives for the MD Degree at Harvard Medical School

- 1. Medical Knowledge.** All students are expected to achieve an understanding of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, social, behavioral, and population sciences, and demonstrate the ability to identify and assess new information relevant to a question and to apply this knowledge to clinical problem-solving and scientific inquiry.

By the time of graduation, all students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, social, behavioral, and population sciences.
2. Apply their understanding of biomedical, clinical, social, behavioral, and population sciences to problems in clinical medicine.
3. Integrate biomedical, clinical, social, behavioral, and population sciences into the care of individuals and populations.
4. Identify and critically appraise new information that is relevant to a biomedical or clinical question.

- 2. Critical thinking and inquiry.** All students are expected to be able to evaluate, analyze, and apply knowledge, to identify gaps in their own learning, to focus on personal growth and lifelong learning, and to engage in scholarly inquiry aimed at advancing knowledge in the ultimate service of relieving human suffering.

By the time of graduation, all students will be able to:

1. Evaluate, analyze and apply new knowledge with advances and discoveries in biomedical science.
2. Identify gaps in their knowledge and skills so as to continually advance their professional development.
3. Apply the skills necessary for continuous personal growth and lifelong learning.
4. Engage in scholarly inquiry with a goal of advancing knowledge in the service of the mission of medicine.

- 3. Patient care.** All students are expected to demonstrate the ability to provide evidence-based, compassionate care for patients that is appropriate for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of illness and the promotion of health, and to work effectively as part of a team with other health professionals.

By the time of graduation, all students will be able to:

1. Provide compassionate, patient-centered care in order to promote and improve health.
2. Obtain and collect information from patients and other sources relevant to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of common and urgent conditions, including the performance of diagnostic procedures.
3. Interpret, analyze, assess, and prioritize relevant data to establish a diagnosis and management plan, including the initiation of appropriate interventions.
4. Work effectively as part of an interprofessional team to ensure safe and appropriate patient care.

4. **Professionalism.** All students are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the highest standards of professional responsibility, integrity and accountability; adherence to ethical principles; self-awareness; and moral reasoning in relation to patients, colleagues, and society.

By the time of graduation, all students will be able to:

1. Exemplify the professional values of medicine, including compassion, integrity, social responsibility and respect for all persons.
2. Demonstrate the responsible behaviors expected of physicians, including accountability, patient confidentiality, punctuality, and the prioritizing of the needs of others.
3. Demonstrate and embody ethical standards, principles and moral reasoning in all professional interactions with patients, families, colleagues, and society at large.
4. Apply the skills and incorporate the attitudes needed to maintain and promote personal wellness.

5. **Interpersonal and Communications Skills.** All students are expected to demonstrate effective verbal, nonverbal, and written communication skills, and to build collaborative and trusting relationships with patients, families, and colleagues.

By the time of graduation, all students will be able to:

1. Form collaborative and trusting therapeutic relationships with patients and their families.
2. Effectively communicate with patients and families to promote informed consent and shared decision making, with appropriate disclosure of sensitive medical information.
3. Effectively communicate medical information in verbal and written form with fellow health professional colleagues to advance patient care.
4. Demonstrate the interpersonal skills required to be an effective contributor or leader on a health care or other professional team.

6. **Organizational and Social Determinants of Health Care.** All students are expected to demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger systems in which illness is experienced and in which care is delivered. In recognizing the social determinants of health and health care, they will demonstrate sensitivity to diverse populations, whether based on ethnicity, culture, gender, economic status, or sexual orientation.

By the time of graduation, all students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the skills needed to advocate for patients to improve health outcomes at the individual and society level.
2. Demonstrate the ability to operate effectively within health systems and also to improve those systems with attention to quality, safety, and value in the delivery of patient care.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of and sensitivity to the social determinants of health and opportunities to address health disparities.
4. Provide care with cultural humility and appreciation of the needs of diverse populations.

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